

# Boat Cottage, Welford on Avon

## Introduction: the house at the bottom of the lane

Boat Cottage is the last house before the river at the foot of Boat Lane, Welford-on-Avon. For about three hundred years it was a public house, first called the Bear and later the Boat. A fire in the 1880s destroyed its older, thatched half, and it has been a private house ever since. Its listed-building entry calls it a seventeenth-century timber-framed cottage with eighteenth-century alterations and a twentieth-century addition (47/9).

Few Welford houses have so much story attached to them and so few hard documents behind the story. The archive of the Welford and Weston Local History Society mentions Boat Cottage, the Boat Inn or the Bear in about forty items. Most of them are short. Many repeat one another, and some of the repetition has hardened into village tradition. This essay sets out what each source actually says, where the sources agree, and where they plainly do not.

Three threads run through the record. The first is the river. The house stands where Boat Lane meets the Avon, beside the old wharves and a crossing place, and its name and trade followed the rise and fall of river traffic. The second is the inn itself: its landlords, its customers, the burnt holes in its chimney beam and the fire that ended it. The third is the house after the inn, and the people who lived there in the twentieth century, among them a Birmingham gunsmith, a watercolourist who painted scenery for the village players, and a succession of later owners known mostly from subscription lists and electoral registers.

## What the archive holds

The main sources fall into a few groups.

- **House histories written by villagers.** Alec Bryan's handwritten note "No. 1: Boat Cottage, in Boat Lane" (11/03) is the most careful. Gilda Gray's entry in the later pages of the Woodward anecdote book (21/56), written around 1970, is the fullest. A short typed walk round "Some Old Houses and Old Folks" (19/26) adds a little.
- **H. M. Woodward's notebooks.** Woodward visited "Mr Carr at his cottage which was once the old 'Boat Inn'" on 6 December 1906 and wrote down what he was told (21/25). He also copied the parish register's account of the 1588 flood (21/49) and later interviewed Dicky Garner (20/01).
- **Official records.** Censuses for 1841 to 1911 (48/01, 14/12, 48/04, 48/05, 48/06, 48/07, 48/08), trade directories (48/13–22, 46/99), the parish council minutes as noted by Woodward (18/13), footpath surveys (06/01, 12/03) and the statutory lists of listed buildings (13/02, 13/03, 47/9, 10/32).
- **Sales.** The 1892 auction of the Baylies estate, where Lot 3 was "a house, formerly known as the Boat Inn" (25/08), and the 1923 auction of Boat Cottage by Hutchings & Deer (11/30).
- **Talks and minutes.** The Society's 1971 house talk (37/01–04), a modern talk on the river (52/09) and a talk on Welford in the early twentieth century (46/37–95).
- **Letters and memories.** Jane Fisher's letter and email about Boat Lane and the Scott and Atkin family (49/01, 49/30), and a 1936 letter written from "The Boat Cottage" (61/01–09).

The archive has no deeds or abstract of title for Boat Cottage, no plan of the house and no interior photographs. Those gaps shape what can be said, and they are noted where they matter.

## **The building**

The official descriptions agree that Boat Cottage is basically a seventeenth-century house, and that most of what shows today is later. Village writers date it earlier, to around 1500, but nobody gives evidence for that date.

### **What the listing says**

Boat Cottage was first listed on 6 February 1952 at Grade II, as part of the group formed by St Peter's Church, the lychgate and the listed houses of Boat Lane and Church Street (13/02). The 1952 and 1967 descriptions are short: "C17. A small amount of timber framing on west end. The remainder being of C18 colour washed brickwork with roof partly of old tiles. 1 storey and attics, casements, 2 canted bay windows" (13/02, 30/07). The county's summary list adds that "this small cottage has group value" (13/03).

The later statutory description is fuller (47/9). It calls the house "C17 with C18 alterations and C20 addition", timber-framed with painted brick infill and painted brick ends, "all on rubble plinth", with a steeply pitched tile roof and a brick end stack. The plan is an L: a two-unit cottage with a gable to the left and a catslide outshut on the left return, extended to the right in the twentieth century. It is single-storey with an attic and a three-window range. The entrance is at the right end of the gable, under a gabled canopy, with a wide-boarded door in a moulded frame. There are canted bay windows to left and right, one with leaded glazing, a flat-roofed twentieth-century dormer, square framing in the centre, and "canted oriel to each floor" on the right return.

The 1992 Conservation Area Study repeats the old listing text and illustrates the house in two photographs (15/08, Map Ref 6, figs 44 and 67). The Society's own 1983 review of listed buildings simply records it as item 17/6, Grade II (10/32; copies at 14/08 and 30/06).



### **What villagers said about its age**

The local writers do not agree. Gilda Gray, around 1970, wrote that "the house dates from the 15 hundreds", with "very interesting timbering in the two original bedrooms" (21/56). The Society's house talk of January 1971 gave it a bare date of "1500" (37/01–04). Alec Bryan was more cautious. He doubted "if this is the original house", writing that "it looks to be built on the site of an earlier house, as the present house doesn't look early enough to be Elizabethian" (11/03).

Bryan's view fits the listing better. The early date seems to come from the 1588 flood story, which proves an inn called the Bear stood somewhere in Welford then, but not that the present walls are that old. The fire account of 1885 also matters here, as the next sections show: it says the older, timber and thatch half of the inn was the part destroyed (08/20–29).

### **The house in 1923**

The best description of the inside comes from the sale particulars of 17 March 1923, copied into the Society's sale notebook (11/30, pp. 24–25). Boat Cottage was offered as "a Riverside Cottage Residence with Large Garden & Orchard":

The House is a half timbered Brick Building and contains — Large Living Room, with Oak Beams & inglenook fireplace, Sitting Room (now used as a bedroom), Pantry, and Two Bedrooms; adjoining is a wood and galvanised Kitchen and Store, 18 ft by 16 ft. At the rear is a flagged Court leading to the well of water & the W.C. & the large productive garden.

This was a small house: two bedrooms in the roof, one large room downstairs with the inglenook, and a lean-to kitchen of wood and corrugated iron. The "Large Living Room, with Oak Beams & inglenook" must be the old main room of the inn, the room whose chimney beam carried the burnt holes described below. The bay windows, oriels and the right-hand

wing in the modern description are not mentioned in 1923, and are presumably the "C20 addition" of the listing.

## **The roof**

One small first-hand detail concerns the roof. Writing about the stone "shingles" in the churchwardens' accounts, a correspondent signing as A.B. recalled that "the Wynns, Scullards and Boat Cottage all had part stone slat roofs. I took the ones off Boat Cottage and replaced them with tiles" (18/36). The listing's "roof partly of old tiles" of 1952 (13/02) and the fully tiled roof of the later description (47/9) fit that change.



The photograph above is the only picture in the archive that has been labelled Boat Cottage, and the label was added during transcription, not written on the print (52/86). If it is Boat Cottage, it shows the house before A.B. replaced the stone slates.

## **From the Bear to the Boat: the river and the inn**

The house's identity as an inn rests on one line in the parish register, and its later name on the opening of the Avon to barges. Both claims are reasonable, but the first link between the Bear of 1588 and this site is tradition rather than proof.

## **The Bear and the flood of 1588**

The Welford register contains an eyewitness account of a sudden flood on the Avon on 18 July 1588. It was printed in the parish magazine in October 1883, and Woodward copied it "as literally as it can be done" (21/49). The flood rose "a yeard every hour from eight until four". It unthatched the mill, broke both ends of Stratford bridge and carried a girl a quarter of a mile on top of a haycock until she was lifted into a boat. Then comes the line on which Boat Cottage's early history depends:

Yt came into the Parsonage of Welford's orchards and filled his fishe poole, it tooke away the signe at the Beare.

The account does not say where the Bear stood. Later copies made the link for the reader. A typed transcription in the archive inserts "The Bear (Boat Cottage)" into the text (02/01–12, 05/03–09), and from Alec Bryan onwards every village writer accepts it (11/03, 21/56, 37/01–04, 52/09). It is a sensible guess. The flood came first into the Rector's orchard, which lay close to the church, and Boat Cottage is the nearest house to the river at the church end of the village. But no source in the archive names the Bear's site, and the 1883 printing is the earliest copy here.

Two small doubts are worth recording. The speaker of the modern river talk says the account "was written some time after the flood and it is believed the year it happened was 1587" (52/09). And the Society's 1971 talk links the lost sign to "the storm which dispersed and sank the Armada" (37/01–04). That is a good story, but the register describes a summer river flood, not a sea storm, and the Armada was not dispersed until later in 1588.

## **The name changes to the Boat**

Bryan wrote that "the name was changed about the middle of the 17th cent. when the river was made navigable" (11/03). Gilda Gray put it the same way: "In the days of the Upper Avon Navigation it became known as the Boat Inn" (21/56). The river talk supplies the background. In 1635 William Sandys of Fladbury was granted letters patent by Charles I to make the Avon navigable, and by the 1700s there were about 400 barges on the river, most carrying around 30 tons (52/09). Barges were towed upstream by teams of men, the "bow-hauliers", rather than by horses.

The archive has no document that dates the change of name. In fact the old name lingered. The 1861 census enumerator, writing house by house, labelled one household "Bear Inn", kept by Charles Butler, innkeeper, born in Pebworth (48/04, schedule 93). The directories of the 1850s already call the house the Boat (48/13), so the enumerator may have been using an older village name. The 1859 Bristol directory even prints it as the "Bowl", corrected in the margin by a later hand to "BOAT" (48/17–18).

## **Wharves, coal and a ferry**

The Boat's trade came up the river. There were wharves at the foot of Boat Lane, "used until 1873, when trade on the river had fallen to a very low level" (52/09). One stood just before Mill House, "very close to the next door Bear Inn or Boat Inn". A later owner of Mill House found coal and pieces of crockery when clearing the ground on the river side (52/09). By 1873 the steam boat *Bee* was the only craft still trading on the Upper Avon.

The Gould family made the connection explicit. Frank Gould of Long Marston told Alec Bryan "that their coal was brought by boat to the wharf at the bottom of Boat Lane and that his grand father took over the Boat Inn so that the Boatmen who came could obtain a nights lodgings and food and drink and so it worked in with the boat buisness and made more profit" (11/03).

A researcher's undated note adds that the bottom of Boat Lane was a crossing place, with the "Rector's willow where the boat to ferry across to the Hillboro' side in flood – was tied" (01/35).

## **The Boat Orchard and the Wake**

The inn came with an orchard running down to the river. It was about an acre: "1a. 0r. 20p." in both 1892 and 1923 (25/08, 11/30). Gilda Gray recorded that when Welford Wake was held in front of the lychgate, "an ox or a pig or both were roasted in Boat Orchard and there was much feasting & dancing" (21/56). Woodward's notes link the innkeeper William Hemming with the roast pig at the Wake (11/15).

The orchard kept its name long after the inn closed. A path ran from the river end of Boat Lane across it to the mill and weir. The 1951 footpath survey described it as running "through orchard belonging to Boat Cottage (Boat Inn) to Welford Mill and weir". When the county's Definitive Map showed a different line, a special parish meeting of 22 April 1969 affirmed, with no elector dissenting, that the path "actually crosses The Boat Orchard, having been in general use for generations. Here the Map is incorrect" (06/01). The county's 1968 review renumbered the path SD 26a, "southwards through The Boat Orchard" (12/03). Jane Fisher remembered childhood walks in the 1930s "down Boat Lane, across the paddock which belonged to Boat Cottage, through the mill farmyard and along the osier beds to Cress Hill" (49/01).

## **Hot poker and prize-fighters**

Two stories about the inn's customers survive, both from the same source. On 6 December 1906 Woodward visited James Carr, then living in the old inn, with a Captain Haynes (21/25). In the beam spanning the chimney opening were "a great number of small round holes". Carr explained that the people of the district "were generally loyal to the Stewarts". When a stranger came in, someone put the poker in the fire, raised it when hot, "repeated quickly a loyal toast" and plunged it into the beam. The stranger then owed a quart of ale "unless the latter had been alert enough to take off his hat".

Carr also said "the Boat Inn used to be a place of meeting for pugilists who would come there from Gloucester and Warwick to fight. If the Police appeared they simply crossed the river into Warwickshire" (21/25). Welford was then in Gloucestershire, and the far bank was another county and another police force.

Woodward added a different view from Mrs Horne, his best informant. She said the boatmen who stayed at the Four Alls also burnt holes in the beam over the fireplace, but she did not remember that the practice meant anything, and thought only the boatmen did it, not the villagers (21/25). Later retellings dropped her doubt and kept Carr's Jacobite story (21/56, 52/09, 19/26).

## Landlords, the fire and the end of the inn

The innkeepers can be traced only from 1851, and the fire that closed the inn happened on Friday 17 July 1885, not in 1890 as several later accounts say.

### The innkeepers

Bryan could trace no landlord before 1850 and listed three: Francis Gould (1850), Joseph Harris (1870) and William Hemming (1876) (11/03). The censuses and directories give a slightly different and longer list.

| Year | Landlord                                                                  | Source           | Note                                     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1881 | William Hemming, 62, innkeeper, b. Quinton; wife Sarah, 60, b. Campden    | 48/06, sched. 99 | "Boat Inn [?]"                           |
| 1881 | Eliza Harris, widow, 49, "late innkeeper & market gardener"               | 48/06            | Probably widow of Bryan's Joseph Harris  |
| 1861 | Charles Butler, 38, innkeeper, b. Pebworth; wife Rebekah and six children | 48/04, sched. 93 | Enumerated as "Bear Inn"                 |
| 1859 | James Tabberer                                                            | 48/17–18         | Printed "Bowl", corrected to "BOAT"      |
| 1856 | James Tabberer, 'Boat'                                                    | 48/13            | Post Office Directory                    |
| 1851 | Joseph Gould, 30, "innkeeper, boat proprietor & coal merchant"            | 14/12, sched. 77 | Son Francis, 3                           |
| 1841 | Elizabeth Day, 50, publican                                               | 48/01            | Second Welford publican; house not named |

The 1851 entry corrects Bryan on one point. The landlord in 1851 was Joseph Gould, and Francis was his three-year-old son (14/12). Joseph described himself as innkeeper, boat proprietor and coal merchant, which is exactly the business Frank Gould described. By 1861 Joseph Gould, 48, was living elsewhere in the village as a coal merchant with his family, including Francis, now 13 (48/04, schedule 86).

The 1841 publican, Elizabeth Day, may or may not have kept the Boat; the census does not name her house, and the only other publican listed was Mary Parker at the Bell (48/01). The 1871 census cannot help, because the pages covering schedules 77–91, where the Boat would be expected, are missing from the copy (48/05).

Some names from earlier centuries are attached to the Boat in Woodward's notes, including Richard Rawlins and William Hemming in connection with the Jacobite toast. The archive notes connect a Richard Rawlins with the 1730 wills (11/15, 11/26), but nothing ties him to the inn directly.

### The fire

The fire is the best-documented event in the house's history. A newspaper report dated 17 July 1885 survives in transcription (08/20–29) and was read in full in the Society's river talk (52/09):

A lively scene. On Friday afternoon, shortly after 5 o'clock, information was received of a fire having broken out at the Boat Inn, Welford. In the commendably quick time of about 10 minutes the local brigade was equipped, and the engine, drawn by four horses, started for the scene of the conflagration, at which it arrived in a little under half an hour.

By then about two-thirds of the house was gone, "the burning embers ... lying in the lane adjoining and inside the premises, two or three of the walls only being left standing". The report explains which part burnt: "The inn was formed of two parts, one being considerably older than the other and composed principally of timber with a thatched roof; this is the portion that has been destroyed." Several barrels of beer were rolled out into the orchard, and "the contents of which were partaken of freely by the men present". The result was "some rather regrettable scenes", and when the firemen intervened, their help "being resented by the villagers ... occasionally a little parlaying took place" (08/20–29).

17 July 1885 was a Friday, which agrees with the report's "Friday afternoon". Two independent witnesses support the date. Dicky Garner told Woodward in 1936 that the church fire "occurred in 1884 and that at the Boat the following summer (1885). Hemming kept the Boat at the time of the fire there" (20/01, p. 25). And an anonymous letter to the *Evesham Journal* of 28 September 1935 recalls being taken by the writer's father "in the early eighties to see the fire at the Boat Inn" (20/01).

The other dates in the archive are later reconstructions:

| Date given         | Source                                         |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1890               | Gilda Gray's house history, c.1970 (21/56)     |
| 1890               | Society house talk, 22 January 1971 (37/01–04) |
| 1890               | Modern talk on Welford c.1901 (46/37–95)       |
| About 1883 or 1884 | Alec Bryan (11/03)                             |
| 17 July 1885       | Newspaper report (08/20–29; read in 52/09)     |

The 1890 date seems to have entered through Gilda Gray and been copied from her. The 1885 report is the earliest source and should be preferred.

The report also bears on the age of the present house. If the older, thatched, timber part burnt, then what survived was the newer part, and the cottage that was "repaired" afterwards is mostly that later building (21/56). This supports Bryan's doubt about an Elizabethan date and the listing's "C17 with C18 alterations" (11/03, 47/9). The "two original bedrooms" with interesting timbering that Gilda Gray admired (21/56) may belong to the surviving block.

## Sale in 1892

The inn did not reopen. Bryan says that after the fire "it was sold and has been a private house ever since" (11/03). The sale came seven years later. On 4 May 1892 Hutchings & Deer auctioned the estate of the late John Holtham Baylies at the Bell Inn. Lot 3 was:

A HOUSE, formerly known as the Boat Inn, with GARDEN and ORCHARD; containing 1a. 0r. 20p., or thereabouts. This lot abuts on the River Avon, the Orchard being well planted with Fruit Trees, and is now in hand. This lot is bounded by properties of Lord Sackville and Mr. Taylor. (25/08)

So far at least some of the inn's last years the freehold belonged to the Baylies family, who also owned land along Headland Road. "Now in hand" means nobody was renting it in 1892. The particulars do not record who bought it.

## **Residents after the inn, 1892 to 1987**

After the inn closed, the house had two long-term families, the Carrs and then the Scotts and Atkins, followed by a series of owners known mostly by name. The archive gives a name for nearly every decade but little about most of the people.

### **James Carr, gunsmith**

The first private owner was James Carr. Gilda Gray calls him "Dr Knott's grandfather, James Carr, a Birmingham gunsmith" (21/56), and the modern talk on Welford around 1901 says he bought the house after the fire (46/37–95). The archive's own records show him there from 1895 at the latest. On 20 April 1895 the new parish council wrote to James Carr "asking him to remove an obstruction to a right of way in Boat Lane", and on 4 July the chairman reported that the obstruction had been removed (18/13). On 1 October 1896 Carr asked the council "to define the boundaries of the 'Old Mill Road'", and a sub-committee answered in January 1897 with a quotation from the enclosure award (18/13). The house sat on the corner of Boat Lane and the private road to the mill, so these disputes were about his own frontage.

Kelly's directory of 1897 lists "Carr James" among the private residents (48/19–20). Spennell's directory of 1900 lists "Carr James, the Boat", so the house was still known by the inn's name (46/99). In the 1901 census an Ellen Carr, 69, born at Cadoxton in Glamorgan, appears at schedule 4 in Mill Lane, entered first as wife, with a visiting brewer's agent (48/08). James was evidently away that night. The address and order of the schedules suggest this is Boat Cottage, but the census does not name the house.

Carr was still there in December 1906, when he showed Woodward the burnt chimney beam (21/25). Woodward listed him among his informants as "Mr Carr of the old Boat Inn" (21/22–66). His grandson, Dr J. A. Knott of Cress Farm House, later edited the parish magazine (19/50, 19/51).

### **The 1923 sale**

On 17 March 1923 Hutchings & Deer sold Boat Cottage at auction on the premises, together with the three Wynns cottages in Chapel Street as Lot II (11/30). Lot I was the cottage with its garden and orchard, the same acre as in 1892. The particulars stressed the river: the orchard "runs down to the River Avon", the property had a long frontage to the lane and to "the Private road leading to Welford Mill", and it was "above flood level & forms one of the most attractive properties in this popular residential village". It was "in hand and is sold with immediate possession". The land tax was 10s 8d a year (11/30, p. 25). The notebook records no price and no buyer.

### **Mrs Scott and Lena Atkin**

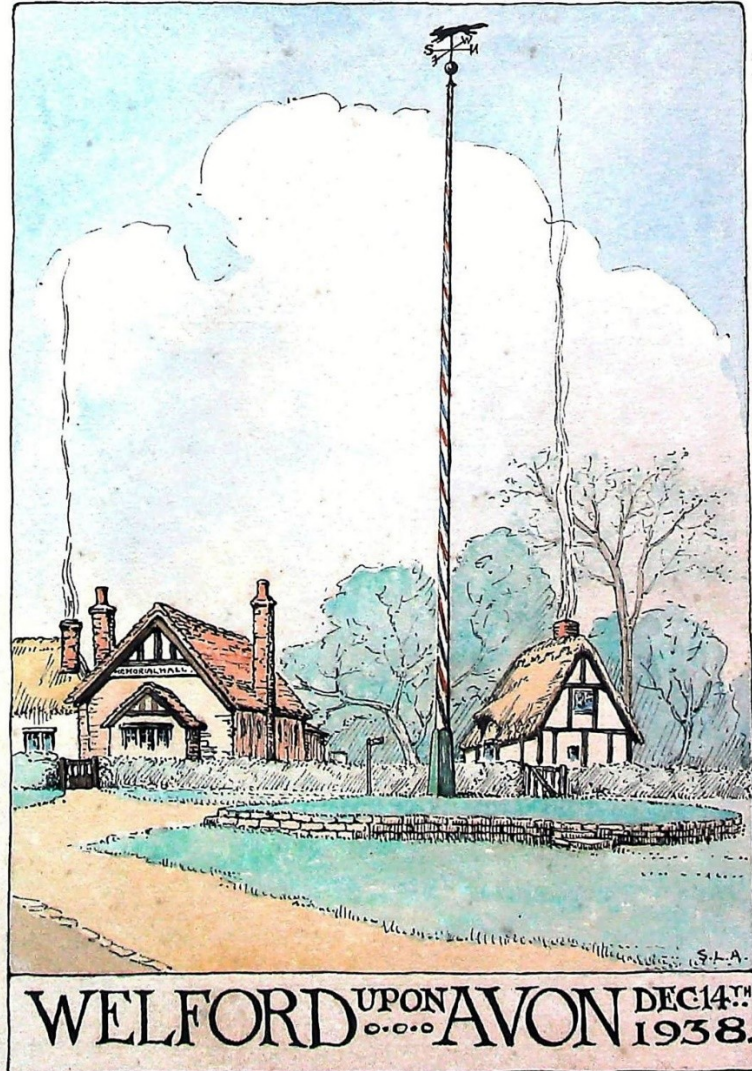
By the 1930s Boat Cottage belonged to a Mrs Scott. Jane Fisher, whose parents rented the Owl Pen in 1929, wrote that most Boat Lane cottages belonged to London owners and were let, often to actors. "The exception was Boat Cottage which belonged to Mrs Scott who lived with her daughter – Selina Atkin (always known later as Lena Atkin) who was a very good watercolourist" (49/01). Lena was born Selina Scott and married Ronald Atkin in the mid-1930s (49/30).



Lena Atkin worked for the village. On 14 December 1936 she wrote from "The Boat Cottage, Welford-on-Avon", telephone Welford-on-Avon 256, to thank Mrs Churchill of the Amateur Dramatic Society. "It was a great pleasure to be able to help with the Scenery for 'Yellow Sands'", she wrote, signing "S. L. Atkin" (61/01–09). The Society's scrapbook lists "Lina Atkin" among its backstage helpers (62/01).

Her best-known piece is the programme for the Duke of Kent's visit on 13 December 1938. The players performed *She Passed Through Lorraine*, and the Duke was handed "a special programme, bearing on the cover a handsome painting of Welford Maypole, the Memorial Hall and half-timbered Magpie Cottage (the work of Mrs. S. L. Atkin, of Welford)". He signed it "George" and gave it back to the Society (11/19). The original survives in the scrapbook (62/01, scrapbook pp. 87–88).

## PROGRAMME OF THE PLAY:



Other traces fill in the picture. The typed walk round old houses says the old Boat Inn was "now occupied by Mr & Mrs Atkins" (19/26). The 1950 house-by-house notebook lists "Mrs Atkin – Boat Cottage" first in Boat Lane, which suggests she was by then a widow or living alone (01/56). A pencil drawing of "Shakespeare's School" in the archive carries the note "Mrs Atkins of Boat Cottage gave me this" (01/66). In October 1953 the parish magazine recorded an oak stool in the sanctuary given jointly by Miss Emily Cooper and "Mrs. Atkin", probably Lena (49/07).

### Later owners

From about 1960 the record thins to names.

| Date       | Resident                                        | Source                            |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1987       | Mollie C. Allen, May L. Cocks, Stephen E. Allen | Electoral register (30/05)        |
| 1976–1985  | Mrs Cocks and Mrs Allen                         | Society subscription book (12/07) |
| 1 Dec 1969 | Mrs Mary Swallow                                | Letter to the press (56/15)       |
| c.1960     | Mr Selwyn, "The Boat"                           | House survey (20/06)              |
| 1950       | Mrs Atkin                                       | House notebook (01/56)            |

Mary Swallow's letter of December 1969 is the only one of these with a voice. Writing to the press, she asked why residents did not petition about "the hideous pumping station, those ugly posts and fences, the tin cans, old baths, road signs and all the other junk and rubbish dumped at the bottom of Boat Lane" (56/15). It was written in the same year as the parish meeting about the Boat Orchard path (06/01).

Mrs Cocks and Mrs Allen subscribed to the Local History Society from 1976 into the mid-1980s (12/07). In planning meetings for January 1985 the committee suggested asking owners to talk about their houses, naming Boat Cottage among them, but decided this would be better at the AGM (37/01–04). No such talk is recorded in the archive.

## Conclusion: what is known, and what is not

Boat Cottage's story is clearest where it touches the river and the inn, and thinnest where a house history usually starts, with deeds and owners.

The firm points are these. An inn called the Boat stood at the bottom of Boat Lane by the 1850s, kept in 1851 by Joseph Gould, innkeeper, boat proprietor and coal merchant (14/12). It served the barge trade from the wharves at the foot of the lane, which ended around 1873 (52/09). Its last landlord was William Hemming (48/06, 20/01). The older, thatched half burnt down on Friday 17 July 1885 (08/20–29). The house was sold with its acre of orchard by the Baylies trustee in 1892 (25/08), was owned by James Carr by 1895 (18/13), and was sold again in 1923 (11/30). Mrs Scott and her daughter Lena Atkin lived there from at least the 1930s to the 1950s (49/01, 61/01–09, 01/56). The present building is a seventeenth-century timber-framed cottage much altered in brick in the eighteenth century and extended in the twentieth (47/9).

The softer points are the ones most often repeated. The link between the Bear of 1588 and this site is a reasonable tradition, not a recorded fact (21/49). The claimed date of about 1500 has no evidence behind it and sits badly with the listing and with the fire report (37/01–04, 47/9, 08/20–29). The Jacobite explanation of the burnt beam comes from one owner in 1906, and a better-placed informant doubted it the same evening (21/25). And the widely repeated fire date of 1890 is wrong (21/56, 37/01–04, 46/37–95).

## Gaps in the record

- **No title deeds.** There is no abstract of title, conveyance or will for the house, so the owners before 1892 and the buyers in 1892 and 1923 are unknown.
- **No interior record.** Apart from the 1923 particulars, nothing describes the rooms, and the burnt beam has not been photographed.

- **Missing census pages.** The 1871 schedules where the Boat would be expected are missing (48/05), and the 1891 schedules give no house names (48/07).
- **The pre-1841 inn.** No directory, licensing record or will in the archive names a Boat or Bear landlord before Elizabeth Day, whose house is itself uncertain (48/01).
- **The 1911 census.** The 1911 summary book gives no house names in Boat Lane and no Carr. Among the Boat Lane schedules it records one uninhabited private house, which may be Boat Cottage, but that cannot be confirmed (48/09, p. 10).
- **The photograph.** The only picture labelled Boat Cottage (52/86) is identified only in its transcription and needs checking by someone who knows the house.

The 1923 particulars called Boat Cottage "one of the most attractive properties in this popular residential village" (11/30). The record behind it is patchy, but it does show a house that has changed with the river at the bottom of its garden: an inn for barge crews and coal boats, then a quiet riverside cottage once the boats had gone.

## Sources

Archive references are folder/item in the Welford and Weston Local History Society scans.